The Honour of Marriage:

OR, THE

Institution, Necessity, Advantages, Comforts, and Usefulness of a

Married Life:

Set forth in a

SERMON

JANUARY 27. 1694.

AT

SEVEN-OAK in KENT.

By *JOSEPH FISHER*, Master of Arts, and Fellow of *Queens* Colledge in *Oxon.*

LONDON:

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer* at the *Three Pigeons* over-against the *Royal-Exchange* in *Cornhill.* 1695.

(b) 25 P

To his much Eſteemed Friend

Mr. THOMAS LAMBARD.

THAT this Sermon was firſt Compoſed, then Preached, and now Publiſhed, I muſt plainly tell you without a Compliment, is not ſo much to be attributed to Your Requeſt, as to that great Reſpect and Kindneſs I have for You. In which, that I might not leave the Text I had pitched upon, and the Bible too, or ſpend upon the Subject a meer Flouriſh of Words and pure Invention: I have confined my Thoughts and Meditations to the Word of God, or rather fetched them from it; becauſe it is that only Rule which ſhould regulate our Opinions and Practices in the weighty concerns of our Life and Salvation, and which ought to give an Authority, Life, and Pungency to all Pulpit-Diſcourſes. A Rule this is which God has given us, and which every Chriſtian eſpecially muſt conſider and ſtudy with Fear and Veneration. I know there are, and have been ſome Men in the World, (witneſs the Theologo-Political, Leviathan, Theory, Critical Hiſtory, Annotation *and* Hiſtory-of-Religion-*Writers*)

ters) *who by the Power of Criticisms and Upstart Notions of Philosophy, either of their own, and some other mens Invention,* i. e. *in my Judgment, by the Infatuation of the Devil, and the Pride of their Hearts, all conspire to ruin and undermine it. Many Books of this kind have appeared in the World, which if the Genius of the Age had not disposed men to receive, and even to gape for, had been comdemned to flames, of which they are worthy; and their Authors censured, as becomes the Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws of the place they live in. Curiosity knows no Bound, either of Modesty or Satisfaction; and therefore, tho it has been my misfortune to look into such Books* (*of which I desire You to beware, and not to follow the Wondering and Silly World, if Ten thousand such should again appear in it*) *and in some measure to consider the Subject-Matter and Tendecy of them; yet I thank God they have no more influence upon my Mind to destroy my Faith, or lessen my Veneration for the Holy Bible, than Debauched Morals, or Ingenious Discourses upon the Praises of Vice, shall by the Grace of God move me to approve them in my Judgment, or in my practice to follow them. I look upon an Unsanctified, Proud, and Aspiring Head, to be as dangerous, as an Ungodly Heart; nay, far more; because the issues of this run in open Contradiction to the general Reason of Mankind: Whereas a Learned* Rabbi, *or one who pretends to be so, is beyond the Sphere of Ordinary Intellectuals; which is the sole Reason why he is admired so much, even then, when he preys upon the Ignorance of Men, and spreads loose Principles, Irreligion and Atheism in the World. Now some such Men as these have been trying their Skill on the Subject of my Sermon, and have endeavoured*

deavoured from the Armoury of their Learning, ſome indulged Practices of former Ages, and unwary Expreſſions of Ancient and Modern Authors, to overthrow the Laws of God and Man for no other end at all, than to let the Reins looſe to Laſciviouſneſs, and in a manner to Brutalize the World. I have in the following Diſcourſe, as I ſaid before, confined my Thoughts to the Word of God, and next to that, the Laws of Men; which are nothing leſs than the Mature Deliberations, Deciſions, and Reſponſes of the Wiſeſt and moſt Authoritative Perſons of former Ages. For by theſe are we to frame our Notions and Opinions, and to ſolve all Doubts concerning Marriage, which is a Subject, perhaps, that affords as many Neceſſary, Uſeful, and Nice Enquiries, as any falls under Humane Cognizance. The only end I aimed at, was to ſhew the Inſtitution and Deſign of it, that You may know what State and Condition of Life You are now entered upon, and therefore I offer it to Your ſerious peruſal. For I am perſwaded, if we would but conſider what God expects of us in every Stage and Station of our Life, we would ſoon live as becomes Reaſonable Men and Chriſtians. Be pleaſed then to accept this as a Teſtimony of my Kindneſs; and God in Heaven bleſs You and the Excellent and Virtuous Lady, which is now your Wife, with his Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings, and give you Grace to do his Will; that ſo you may fulfil the Deſires of Your moſt Loving and Tender Parents, and the good Wiſhes of all your Friends; that you may attain thoſe ends for which God has given you Excellent Endowments of Mind, Body, and Fortune, and anſwer the Expectation of your Country; that you may follow the Example

ample of your Great Grandfather, of whose Learning and Charity, the Books he writ, and the Colledge he Erected at Greenwich, *are lasting Monuments; And lastly, that you may not frustrate the earnest Prayers for your Temporal Prosperity and Eternal Happiness, of*

SIR,

From *Broad-Street*, London, *Febr.* 2.

Your Quondam-Tutor and ever Affectionate and Unfeigned Friend,

JOSEPH FISHER.

THE

THE
Honour of Marriage, &c.

HEB. XIII. 4.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

IN this Prophane and Profligate Age, wherein Men generally, either from the *Pride* and *Folly* of their *Wit* and *Learning*, or from the Open and Impudent *Debauchery* of their Lives, clamour againſt the *Holy Inſtitutions* of *God*, as things either above, or below, or contrary to their *Reaſon*, or rather as *Appointments* to curb that *Licentiouſneſs* they give themſelves up unto; I hope it will not be amiſs, eſpecially for Perſons of my Function, to endeavour all they can, as becomes them to put a ſtop to ſuch ſpreading Impiety as now

now abounds every where, but more notoriouſly in the moſt populous Places. And for this end, I think there can hardly be taken a more effectual Courſe, than to demonſtrate to mens Reaſon, That Revealed Religion, as to the Moral and Preceptive part of it, injoyns no Duty but what is in the very nature of the thing agreeable to the unprejudiced Voice, and promotive of the Common Good of Mankind. Wickedneſs may cloud mens Underſtanding, and ſomewhat *Stifle* the Natural Dictates of *Reaſon*, but it can never wholly exſtinguiſh them; and therefore Divines may have this comfortable proſpect for all their pains which they ſhall take in this matter, that they may force the moſt Looſe and Unreaſonable to an inward Self-accuſation, although their Arguments and Dealings with them may not prove Efficacious enough intirely to reform them.

It is our Duty to labour in the *Ways* and *Truths* of *God*, and to leave the ſucceſs of our Induſtry to his All powerful Bleſſing. For as there are Seaſons wherein he *makes his word to proſper in the thing for which he ſent it*; So are there times of Judicial Blindneſs, in which, what Prophets or Preachers ſoever *God* raiſes up amongſt them, mens hearts are hardened, and *in ſeeing they ſee not; and in hearing, hear not; neither will they underſtand.* Thus we know it was twice, if not oftner with that Nation which *God* made choice of to be his *Peculiar People* and *Church*; and if ever the like Judgment ſeize and harden any other *Nation*, we have the greateſt reaſon to think it is then, when the Word of God has no effect upon it. For then Men

Iſaiah 55. 11.

Iſaiah 6. 9, 10. Matth. 13. 14, 15. Rom. 11. 8.

Men ſeem to be curſed with an hardened Heart, with an obſtinate and rebellious Temper, and to be given up to a Spirit of Deluſion, which will infatuate and confound them more and more, till they are ripe for Vengeance. God in his Mercy avert this ſad Judgment from us of *England*, which has been heretofore peculiarly remarkable for a Religious Diſpoſition. And therefore why ſhould that Complaint be as juſt againſt us, as it was once againſt *Iſrael? How is the faithful city become an Harlot! it was full of judgement, righteouſneſs lodged in it, but now murderers.* Jer. 1. 21.

I am very ſenſible ſuch a Preface as this, is too large for that Diſcourſe, which the Nature and Deſign of the Words I have read, lead me to. Be it ſo; yet I am fully convinced, it is not wholly impertinent. For is it not that ſame Prophaneneſs from which men deride, much more refuſe to practice the Sacred Laws of God, and the *Awful Eſtabliſhments* of his Will, that prompts them now to revile that Sacred and Neceſſary Inſtitution and State of Life I am to ſpeak of; which one would think needed not any thing like a poſitive Law from Heaven at firſt to ratify it? If we can ſee any thing in the World without a borrowed Light, we may ſee the neceſſity of this. And when the Laws of God, and the Verdict of Reaſon meet together in the ſame thing, what greater evidence can we have either of the Sacredneſs or Obligation of it? There is no curing by meer Natural Means that Blindeſs and Boldneſs which dare riſe up againſt ſuch an Inſtitution; and therefore when the Will and Sanction of God

are made manifeſt to the Conſciences of Men; if wicked Wretches will ſtill open their Mouths againſt them, it is becauſe they are judicially blinded and given up to *vile affections*, *to filthy and fleſhly luſts*, and *unto laſciviouſneſs*, *to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*.

Rom. 1. 26.
1 Peter 2. 11.
Eph. 4. 19.

I have ſaid thus much before hand, becauſe I am ſenſible that Marriage has been decried and reviled of late by thoſe, who abſtain from it, not for their Virtues or Religion ſake, that they may with the more freedom of mind *care for the things of the Lord*; but rather that they may feed thoſe Vices, and take their Paſtime in thoſe abominable Sins; for the prevention of which, it was in a great meaſure appointed and permitted to all Men, and Chriſtians; ſome of whom perhaps might otherwiſe with more Eaſe and Undiſturbedneſs in their Functions have lived without it. He muſt be a Man of ſtrange Reſervedneſs and Solitary Life, who knows not this to be a common Subject to break Jeſts upon, and then to give Entertainment for Mirth and Laughter, when the Unfaithfulneſs of either Married Party, or the Violation of thoſe Religious and Solemn Vows which they made to each other, is either *truly* or *falſly* talk'd of. But believe me, it is a very dangerous thing to jeſt upon the Iniquities of Men. This is to meddle with edged Tools, *to make a mock of ſin*, and to be pleaſed with that which ſhould make us all both Fear and Tremble. Let therefore men ſay what they liſt (for that wicked Men will do in ſpite of every thing that is Sacred) it is the Duty of all Conſcientious Perſons to regard the

1 Cor. 7. 34.

Prov. 14. 9.

the Word of God, and to frame Notions of things, and to have a Veneration for them according to that Sacredneſs they derive from his Will and Appointment. Now after this manner I intend at preſent to conſider Marriage, from theſe Words of the Divine Author.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, &c.

And for this end, I deſign to premiſe a brief Explication of them. *Marriage is honourable.* The Words may be rendred either by way of *command*, Let *Marriage be honourable*, and ſo thoſe that follow, *Let the bed be undefiled*; or of *Aſſertion*, as we do; but whether Form of Speech be taken, the ſenſe is ſtill the ſame as to the genuine Signification of the Words themſelves. And by the term *Honourable*, we may not only underſtand that Marriage is lawful in Oppoſition to ſome * Madmen (for no better I can call them) the † Hæreſiologiſts, * Hiſtorians, and other † Writers of the Primitive Church mention and confute; but alſo, that it is highly Expedient, Neceſſary, and Commendable in its ſelf. Or thus, Marriage is that State of Life, which is and ought to be much approved and reverenced in all Civilized Nations; It * gains Reſpect and Priviledges amongſt them. *Nature*, *Religion*, and the *Propagation* of Mankind require it; and therefore for the good it produceth, for the Original Inſti-

τίμιος ὁ γάμος.

* Encratites, Saturninus, &c.

† Epiph Hær. 3. Sect. 2. & Seq. & Hær 47. Sect. 1,2. Iren. l. 1. c. 22.

* Euſeb. 4, 28, 29.

† Cl. Alex. lib. 3. Tert. contr. Marc. lib. 1. Vid. 1. Tim. 4. 3. & ibi Commentatores.

* Ham. in loc. lit. a.

tution and Design of it, it should be looked upon with Esteem and Honour. This Author adds, in

ἐν Πᾶσιν. *All*, *Marriage is honourable in all*, that is, in all Men; it is not unlawful for any, naturally considered. No man, much less any Society of Men, are by the natural or positive Law of God debarred from it. So that it is in it self as honourable in *All* as *Any*; or the Words, *in all*, may signify, *Omnino atque perfecte*; *Omnibus modis*, or *omni ex parte*, or the like, *i. e.* altogether as some * interpret them, or as in the *Æthiopick* Version בכולם in every place, in all Nations, Religions, and Professions. The *Arabick* Interpreter, thus renders ἐν Πᾶσι, עלי כל האל, that is, as I understand it, in all States or Conditions of Men; whether they be High or Low, Noble or Ignoble, Rich or Poor, Old or Young; in all these a Married Life doth justly challenge a worthy Esteem. It follows in

* Estius.

καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος. the Text, And *the Bed undefiled*. By which we may first understand a pure Virginal or Chast Life, which every one that is acquainted with the Primitive Writers knows to have been highly * valued and extolled by the first Christians; in respect of which Marriage its self was accounted somewhat polluted, and much inferior in degree of Purity and Chastity. Or Secondly, By these Words may be noted a Bed kept free from the deadly and crying Sins of Fornication, Adultery, Uncleanness, and all manner of Lasciviousness, whether in Married or Unmarried Persons. If the first Sense be taken, then the term Honourable is again to be repeated, ἐστὶ κοινὴ, as Rhetoricians speak, after

* 1 Cor. 7. 34. Chrysost. de Virgin. c. 15, 16. Euf. prop. Evang. l. 9. Grot. in 1 Cor. 7. 34.

after this manner; *And the bed undefil'd is honourable:* So that both the Conjugal and Virginal Life are to be esteemed. Both of them are in themselves lawful, in their ends useful, and sometimes with respect to the several Conditions of Men necessary. And therefore Marriage is honourable, and a Virginal single Life is honourable when they are undertaken upon good Accounts, and Prudently and Christianly managed for the attainment of them. But if these Words be taken, as I think they ought to be, in Opposition to all Uncleanness and Unlawful Beds, then their meaning is, that Marriage only makes the Cohabitation and Mutual Knowledge of Man and Woman lawful. To every one besides the Married, the Bed is defiled either by Fornication or Adultery, which are Sins of a very heinous and dreadful Nature; for *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* I take the word Πόρνες in this place to signify Fornicators, properly so called, * as a Learned Man does. And therefore in this last Clause of the Verse, is contained a dreadful Threatning or Tremendous Judgment on all the Unchaste, whether Married, or Single Persons. God will severely punish such Sinners; their Sins are of a polluted and damning Nature; they proceed from the most *vile Thoughts, unreasonable Appetites, ungovern'd Passions,* and *filthy Lusts:* And consequently the God of all Holiness and Purity must needs hate and abhor them; and pursuant to that Detestation and Aversion he has for them, will his Judgments be.

Πόρνες ὃ καὶ μοιχὲς κρινεῖ ὁ Θεός.

* Grotius.

Whoremongers

Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Having thus far premiſed an Explication of my Text, which might naturally offer theſe Subjects to be treated on;

1. Upon what account Marriage is honourable.
2. The Excellence and Deſign of a Monaſtick and Single Life, and how ſerviceable it may be to the Holy Offices of Religion.
3. A Compariſon betwixt the Married and Unmarried Life, with reſpect to God's Service and Chriſtian Piety.
4. The horrid Sinfulneſs of Whoredom and Adultery, and what dreadful Puniſhments God has provided for them.

I ſhall in a manner wave all the Three laſt, and pitch upon the firſt, as it is repreſented to our Conſideration from the firſt Words of it, *Marriage is honourable.* And that I may ſpeak of it ſutably to this Sacred Penman's Deſign or Aſſertion, I intend to ſhew wherein the Honour of Marriage conſiſts, or for what reaſons ſuch a State of Life is to be accounted Honourable, and purchaſe a great Eſteem in the World. And for the more clear and effectual Proſecution of this Point, what I have to ſay ſhall be caſt into theſe four following Particulars.

1. I will conſider the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage.

2. The

2. The neceſſity of it for the Propagation of the World, and the good of Mankind.

3. The Advantages, Comforts, and happy Conſequents of it.

4. I will conſider it as it is an Antidote againſt the moſt notorious and crying Sins.

I. I am to conſider the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, as it was ordained, and as I may ſay, ſolemnized by God himſelf in the two firſt Progenitors of Mankind. For Revelation aſſures us, That God did not only make them, but likewiſe that he made them with a deſign to joyn them together in a Marriage-Union. He formed the Woman out of one part of the Man; and as the Scripture ſaith, *brought her unto him*; which Divine Act *Adam* interpreted to intimate the Solemn Bond of Matrimony, whereby they were once more to be made the *ſame Bone*, and the *ſame Fleſh*. * This I take with Learned Men to be that place of Scripture, whereon the Solemnization of Marriage is firſt grounded; † and to this we know our Lord and Saviour referred as to the Original Law of Marriage in a Caſe concerning Divorce that was put to him. Now Marriage as ſuch, containing a Solemn Obligation of Man and Wife to each other, and conſiſting in the cloſeſt Bond of Union that can be betwixt two Individuals of the ſame Nature (* for by theſe I find both the School-men and Canoniſts

Gen. 2. 22. C. 1. 27.

Gen. 2. 21, &c.

* Vid. Hiedeg. Exercit. 1. Sect. 9. &c. J. Meyer. Uxor. Chriſt. diſſer. prim. Sect. 1. cap. 3. p. 34, &c. c. 2. p. 19.

† Matth. 19. 3, 4, 5, 6.

* Lomb. 4. d. 27. lit. b. Aq. Sup. Q. 44. Art. 1, 2. Greg. de Val. Tom. 4. diſp. 10. punct. 1. de Sponſal. c. 27. Q. 2.

to define it from *Iſidore)* and both of them being plainly repreſented to us in this Matrimonial Conjunction of the firſt Man and Woman; I ſhall offer theſe things as moſt remarkable from this place of *Geneſis*;

1. That God, by what Manifeſtation of himſelf I know not, was actually intereſted in it. And that firſt of all by framing the Woman out of the Man, which made her the more an affectionate and ſuitable Companion for him. She was but a Part and Portion of himſelf, beautified and adorned to attract his Love, to charm and win his Affections; ſo that ſhe was but *himſelf in his own likeneſs*, being originally Bone of his Bone. And therefore as the Apoſtle argues, as *no man ever yet hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it*: So it was impoſſible that Man ſhould not be enamoured with a Creature that was framed on purpoſe for his *Society* and *Aſſiſtance*. In which Act of God (altho I will not ſay, that Marriage is a Sacrament, yet I think it may be affirmed) there was ſomething Sacramental, implying that *Mutual Love* and *Dearneſs*, that *Familiarity*, *Society*, and *Oneneſs*, there ought to be betwixt them. All this the very Manner and Circumſtances of the Womans Creation ſeemed to preſignify, and was ſo underſtood by *Adam*, as appears in the Sequel of the Sacred Story.

Eccl. 36. 24.

Eph. 5. 29.

See Bp. *Patrick's* Comment. Gen. 2. 22. Vid. Perer. in diſſert. de formatione Evæ ex Adam. l. 4. p. 157, *&c.* in Gen.

2. And then Secondly, Whereas it is ſaid, That *God brought her to the Man*; however that matter of Fact was accompliſht, I take the words to denote God's

God's Intention to make them One again in a Bond of Marriage. He offered her to him like a Father amongſt us; he as it were contracted them, and gave her unto him in Wedlock. And on the other ſide, the Man approved and conſented to this Act of God, and received her to be his Wife at his hands; this is ſpecified in the 23d and 24th Verſes of the Chapter.

3. And then laſtly, in this Tranſaction may be conſidered that Bond and Union which reſulted from hence; even ſuch an One as ſeemed to cancel, or at leaſt, * to take place of all other Obligations. *Therefore* (ſays *Adam*) *ſhall a man leave his Father, and his Mother, and ſhall cleave unto his Wife; and they ſhall be one fleſh.* Gen. 2. 24.

* Vid. Theoph. ad Autolicum, l. 2. p. 104.

Now from all this, * not to mention that peculiar hand of Providence, which is obſerved to be in all Marriages; I ſhall infer theſe Three following Obſervations.

* Vid. Pro. 19. 14. & ibi inter Chald. & Syriac. item Gloſſas Ab. Ezræ & L. Gerſom. Waganſcil. Sota, p. 66.

1. That Marriage is to be lookt upon as a Religious Bond and Contract. It depended at firſt upon a Solemn Inſtitution of God, as to all the Eſſentials of it. And ſurely, amongſt all Men, either of Reaſon or Religion, for this Cauſe it ought to be highly eſteemed and honoured. The Laws of God, you know, ſhould regulate every Act of ours that is governable by Reaſon; they ſhould controul and direct our Natural Appetites, and keep them within thoſe Bounds and Limits which he has ſet them. And therefore, becauſe

whatever has any Character of *Religion* ſtampt upon it, does as ſuch proceed from God, and he is the *Author* of it, and in our uſe thereof we ſhould direct it to thoſe ends which he has appointed; we are to look upon Marriage as a Sacred Obligation, and to obſerve the Inſtitution and Deſign of God, whenever we enter upon it.

2. Whatever God has made lawful or unlawful in his written Word, with reſpect to Marriage, we muſt own and acquieſce in, as ſuch; for his poſitive Law, and the Actual Revelation of his Will, is the Fundamental Director in this caſe. I mean not that God ſhould determine every thing that belongs to Marriage-Solemnity; but that whatever he has determined at ſeveral times, and upon ſeveral occaſions, to be of perpetual practice, ought and muſt be Religiouſly obſerved by them, who have and acknowledge his Revelation.

3. All that are Married, muſt look upon themſelves as obliged to each other under a Sacred Bond and Tye of Religion. They are to be *faithful* for fear of a Curſe from God, or of being *Betrayers* and *Perverters* of his Holy Inſtitution. They are to drive on no ſeparate Intereſts; they muſt conſcientiouſly diſcharge thoſe Duties which the ends of Marriage, their Union, and God himſelf, requires of them. *No man* ſhould act contrary to himſelf; and conſequently, *no Married Perſons* ſhould prejudice each other, for they are made One by *Promiſe*, by *Bargain*, and by *Vow*.

II. The

II. The next thing I am to consider, is the Necessity of Marriage for the Propagation of the World, and the good of Mankind. Indeed, if God had left Man as undetermined, as he has done other Creatures, which multiply their several kinds, then there would have been no such thing as Marriage; but having not only framed Man, and made him fit to propagate his Species by multiplying Individuals; but likewise determined him as to the Manner and Lawfulness of it by a Solemn Matrimonial Contract, which he has done in no other Species besides that I know of; it must needs be a Sin in any to break the Rules of this Determination; because it is an open Violation of a perpetual Law, for which an Account must be given in the Day of Judgement. And hence is it, that if Men must continue to the World's end, 'tis necessary that People marry; otherwise they must Sin against God, and their Off-spring will be unlawful. This I would not have so understood, as that there is a necessity upon every one in particular to Marry; but that Mankind ought not, and therefore cannot lawfully be perpetuated in the World, save only by Wedlock. I know the * *Jewish* Canonists and Civilians affirm, That all Men are obliged to Marry; and they ground their Opinion on these words of Scripture; † *Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth, and subdue it.* This is the first Commandment acccordiug to their Account; and is by them from the words of the

* Tal. Babyl. Tit. Jeb. 65. 2. Shulcan Aruch. in Eben. Ezre. p. 3. N. 1. Sect. 1. & sic passim. apud. alios.

† Gen. 1. 28.

Text, called פריה ורביה, i. e. *Lex ad procreationem & multiplicationem liberorum obligans.* But I think they miſtake the Senſe of the Text, which in my Opinion is not *ſo* to be interpreted, as if it laid an Injunction upon every one to Marry; for they themſelves exempt from it, * ſome the whole Female Sex †, others ſome Men either intirely, or till later years than the Obligation of this Law according to their Deciſions generally commenceth. And * again, the ſame words are ſpoken of other Creatures which are capable of no ſuch poſitive Law. And therefore I judge they denote, by a figurative Manner of Speech, the inward *Diſpoſition*, *Frame*, and *Nature* of Mankind for multiplying themſelves and peopling the World. God hath *ſo made* and ordained Man, that he is naturally apt and prone to propagate his own kind. *God* (ſays *Moſes*) *created Man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them, be fruitful and multiply and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it.* Where the *Hebrew* word, וַיְבָרֶךְ, which we tranſlate, *and he bleſſed them*, ſeems to intimate Gods furniſhing Man in his very Nature with powers and willingneſs to anſwer the end of his Creation, particularly that of perpetuating his Poſterity to the end of the World. This is an Obſervation (* tho borrowed from another) of a † Learned and Late Critick upon the 22 Verſe of this Chapter: Whom with * another, that is aſhamed very often of his Name, and therefore * goes

* Vid. Jaſchi in Gen. 1. 28.

† Maim. Hal. אישות cap. 15. Sect. 1, 2. Vid. Buxt. de Sonſ p. 8, 9. Hottin. de Jur. Heb. p. 6. &c. Seld. de Jur. N. & Gent. 5. c. 3.

* Gen. 1. 22.

Gen. 1. 27, 28.

* Ex V. ſi Synopſeos Authori fides.

† Mr. Le Clerk.

* F. Simon.

* goes under many other: I may juſty call Audacious and Ungodly Dealers with the Word of God. For they appear to me to labour on purpoſe by their Criticiſms, of which to unbridled Wits, there will never be an end, to undermine the Scriptures (as others do by their Whimſical Notions of Modiſh Philoſophy) and to render them altogether uſeleſs for the ends of Piety and Religion, which God deſigned them for. May he in his due time by ways beſt known to himſelf, and agreeable to his Wiſdom, blaſt ſuch attempts upon his Sacred Oracles, which theſe men look on as a *good old Book* they may Criticize upon, and not as it is the *Rule* of our *Faith and Manners.* In ſhort then, the foremention'd Text containing a Benediction founded in the Nature and Faculties of Men, the uſe and exerciſe of them ought to be, and are, (as I have ſhewed before) regulated by the Law of God, as all our Powers governable by Reaſon muſt be.

* Vid. def. des Sentemens, &c. lettre 1. p. 3.

And therefore, as God has ordained Marriage as the only means for the Continuation of Men in the World, none can violate this method without ſinning moſt heinouſly againſt him. For whoever is ſuch a Tranſgreſſor, turns the *Sin of his Soul* into the *Fruit of his Body*; makes himſelf polluted and brutiſh; propagates the Seed of *Baſeneſs*, *Reproach*, and *Corruption*; lets his Luſts and Vile Affections hurry him on to break the Laws of God, and he kindles and fans that burning Flame which will deſtroy him in the loweſt Hell. God has reſtrained all licentiouſneſs by a

Marriage

Maraiage Inſtitution; and why then ſhould men tranſgreſs this Law which is ſo *Sacred* and *Perpetual*; hardly any Sins are more provoking than Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanneſs: God will avenge ſuch ſeverely, he will puniſh them dreadfully, if we may believe his written Word; and therefore thoſe that are guilty of them, cannot eſcape Everlaſting Fire. Now, from all this, you ſee what an Honour is reflected on Marriage from God; it makes the Bed undefiled; legitimates the World; makes Parents honeſt, credits their Off-ſpring, and derives a Bleſſing from Heaven. In fine, it gives *Being*, *Honour*, *Priviledges*, *Rights*, and *Bleſſings* to Children, amongſt all Civilized Nations.

III. Having thus far laid before you the Original and Neceſſity of a Married Life, both of which proceed from the Natural and Poſitive Law of God, I ſhall now in the next place conſider the Bleſſings and Conſolations of it: For it is a State which has its preſent Comforts; and in the firſt Deſignation thereof, was ordained for the attainment of them; and for this reaſon neither Sex can complain that God has impoſed a burthen too heavy for them to bear. For,

1. Firſt, *Moſes* ſays, That after Man was created, *The Lord God ſaid it is not good that man ſhould be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. It is not good*; that is to ſay, it is no way *convenient* or *comfortable*, or *agreeable* to him

Gen. 2. 18. Vid. Buxt. de Sponſ. 132. M. Ben. Iſrael. Concil. in Gen Q. 16.

or

or his condition in the world, and therefore he created * עזר כנגדו a *Help meet for him*, as we interpret it: But the words are variously translated by others, viz. *Anxilium simile sibi*, in the vulgar *Latin*, followed by the *Syriack* Version, a *Help like unto himself*, i. e. one of the same *Nature* and *Constitution* with him; one of equal *Tenderness* and *Regard* for him as he has for himself, or one created on purpose to perform all those kind offices of assistance which his condition in the world requires from her; in the *Septuagint*, ὡς βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτὸν, an Assistant according to himself; that is, according to his * Nature and wants and wishes. In the *Chaldaick* Version of *Onkelos*, סמך כקבליה in the *Samaritan*, מער כקבלה a Help, a Support, a Prop, *as before him*; and in the *Arabick*, עונא הראה of the same meaning; so that in the sense of these three Translations, wherein the Grammatical signification of the word כנגדו is expressed, and therefore put in the Margin of our *English* Bibles, the whole Sentence implies, that God created * one that would be a *present* and *perpetual* aid to man; one that should be *always* at hand, in his *power*, and *helpful*. The *Jerusalem Targum* is somewhat obscure and paraphrastical, I will make him בר זוג כד נפיק ביה *a Toke-fellow that may go out with him.* I shall pass by those extravagant Interpretations some *Jews* make on purpose to countenance their Opinions concerning Divorce, and shall content my self with * that Gloss of a Rabbi as I find him cited, because the *Jews* generally agree in it, *I will make an help* שיהיה כנגדו תמיד לעובדו ולשומרו *which shall be always with him, or at hand, to minister unto, and to observe him.* But what needs Criticism?

* Ezer Cenegdo.

* Vid. Lud. de Dieu in loc.

* Vid. Fag. & Kimchi in Rad.

* Vid. Buxt. loc. præd.

* Vid. Nold. conc. p. 1003. Num. 1381.

ciſm? the beſt way to interpret *words* is to conſider *things*, and to direct the meaning of *thoſe* to the nature and uſe of *theſe*; and therefore by the word כנגדו we may underſtand, that the Woman was created, to perform all the Duties incumbent upon her towards the Man, not excluding his towards her; and conſequently ſhe was not ordained or given to him for the *Gratification* of his *Luſt*, but for the *Comfort* of his *Life*. And from hence you ſee for what God made ſuch a Fellow creature; *It was not good for Man* to be ſingle and ſolitary, he wanted one to aſſiſt and cheriſh him; to be his individual Companion; a *Conſtant*, a moſt *Intimate Familiar*, and a *Boſom-Friend*.

We of all God's Creatures are born for Society; of which Husband and Wife are the firſt two, a whole Family the next part, a City the third, and ſo on till you come to the laſt Complement or Combination of it: And as all Society is appointed for the good of every Individual of it, ſo is that of Man and Wife by the expreſs Command and Counſel of God who made them. *Adam* in a Reply to God, calls her, *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me.* The *Hebrew* Words, האשה אשר נתתה עמדי, *The woman which thou gaveſt with me* *, i. e. to ſtand by me (as ſome ſeem to ſuppoſe) are thus rendred by the *Samaritan* Verſion †, אתתה דאתנחרת לי, *The woman which thou broughteſt to me*, viz. which thou didſt *betroth* unto me, give to be my *Spouſe* or *Wife*, and join to me in the ſtricteſt Bond of Union. So that from the ſenſe of theſe two places, we fully

Gen. 3. 12.

* Vid. Inter. Syr. Chald.

† Nold. conc. p. 1059. Num. 830.

fully learn what end God aimed at in the Creation of the Woman, and the Donation of her to the Man; namely, That they ſhould mutually aſſiſt each other, and be one and the ſame Perſon almoſt in every Condition of Life. They were to *communicate* in each others *Joys*, *alleviate* their *Griefs*, aſſiſt by their *Prudence* their *Labour* and *Induſtry*, and earneſtly *promote* the welfare of one another. For thus, and thus only could the neceſſities of their Nature be *ſupplied*, and their Infirmities *ſupported*, which otherwiſe each of them muſt inevitably have laboured under if remaining Single. And if we will believe Inſpired Writers, the Woman is not only the *Comfort*, but the *Ornament* of a Man's Life. *A vertuous woman is a crown to her husband. Her price is far above rubies; the heart of her husband doth fully truſt in her; ſhe will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her Life.* To which I will add theſe words of *Syracides*, *He that getteth a Wife, beginneth a Poſſeſſion; a help like unto himſelf, and a Pillar of reſt.* Prov. 12. 4. Prov. 31. 10, 11, 12. Eccluſ. 36. 24.

2. That I may further ſhew how *joyous* and *comfortable* ſuch a Life as this is; it may be ſufficient to obſerve, That *Love* which ſweetens every thing we deſire, or take in hand in this World, ought in Marriage to have a ruling ſhare, or at leaſt a very *large Proportion*. For it is not only that thing which *may*, but which *muſt* be the Bond of Matrimonial Union. 'Tis this which muſt move the Heart and Affections of each Party, determine the Choice, gain Conſent, (* which is the moſt Eſſential Part of the Eſpouſals) and which will caſt a

* Vid. decret. Canſ. 27. Q. 2. Matrimonium & Sufficiat.

perpetual *Joy* and *Delight* upon the *Happy Pair*. Every one that conſiders the State of Humane Nature, muſt know what an abſolute Command this Paſſion has in the *Braveſt* and *Wiſeſt* Hearts. 'Tis this that makes Men ruin themſelves, or promote their own welfare; for we often *love* what we ſhould *hate*, and we *hate* what we ſhould *love*; and from hence is it that we are made Miſerable. In truth, it requires *great Art*, much *Watchfulneſs*, ſtrength of *Judgment*, a controuling *Sway* over our ſelves, a *profound Fear* of God, and *Senſe* of *Religion*, to regulate this Paſſion, and to keep it upon right Objects, and within bounds of Moderation: But I may ſay, That in the Married State it can hardly have *exceedings*: the *dearer* the *Affection*, the *better* it is; and the more *intire*, the more *pure*, the more *laſting* that love is, 'tis the more *commendable*, and makes Life more *comfortable*. *Husbands* (ſays St. *Paul*) *love your wives*, for this *cements* them together into One; it mingles their Affections, gives them one *Heart* and one *Soul*; and whatever makes a Separation, is either the *bitterneſs* of Death, or the more tormenting *Flames* of Contention. He knows not what Love is, nor the Joys that follow it, *i. e.* he has nothing at all of Humanity in him, who perceives not in his mind the many Conſolations which muſt ariſe from ſuch united Hearts, from ſuch a *redoubled force* of *Kindneſs* and *Affection*.

Col. 3. 19.

3. Further, Thirdly, That which may recommend a Married Life to all but Prophane and Laſcivious Wretches is this, that it engages Men to *Induſtry*

Industry and *Labour*, to *Honesty* and *Providence*, and to be *Religious* and *Useful* in the World. For what are all *Men*, and the *Riches* of the World, but so many *Monuments* of Marriage-Blessings? What is it else that maintains the *Port*, and carries on the *business* of Humane Society? The Being and Well-being of Families and Kingdoms; nay, the Cloister it self which contends for Pre-eminence, does wholly depend upon it; dares therefore any be so bold and impudent as to think *slightly*, or talk *scurriously* of that which has produced so much good in the World! And of which he himself, unless he be *Base* and *Ignominious*, is a *Fruit* and *Production*.

4. And lastly, When I have named *Children*, I have said enough upon this Head of my Discourse. For these are the greatest Worldly Blessings that God can bestow upon any; they are the *Repositories* where *Parents* bestow the Fruits of their Industry and Labours; they are the *Darlings* of their *Affections*, which ill Behaviour and Undutifulness can never wholly extinguish. Experience teaches us, and the young Part of Mankind may be glad of it, that nothing excites greater Love or Care in Parents than Children; for which this reason may be given, that Nature, whose Inclinations and Propensions are unconquerable, has implanted in them a deep Tenderness and Love for their Off-spring: whereas God knows they have too too often very little cause to be kind and loving. Oh! how do they rejoyce at the blooming *Hopes* and *Welfare* of their Children! They think no *Pains* too much, no *Labour* too te-

dious for a happy Proviſion for them: And why ſhould not Fathers do ſo? for their Children are nothing leſs than themſelves *multiplied*, their *Names* and *Beings* in a manner made *Immortal* in the World, or continued down from *Generation* to *Generation*. This we find reckoned a Bleſſing from God on the Pious Man.

Pſalm 128. 1, 2, 3, 6. *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord: that walketh in his ways. For thou ſhalt eat the labour of thy hands: happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be well with thee. Thy wife ſhall be as a fruitful vine by the ſides of thine houſe: thy children like olive-plants round about thy table. They ſhall ſee thy childrens children.*

Pſalm 127. 3, 4, 5. Again, *Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of mighty men: ſo are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they ſhall not be aſhamed, but they ſhall ſpeak with the enemies in the gate.*

IV. The laſt thing I propoſed, was to conſider Marriage as an Antidote againſt the moſt *notorious* and *crying Sins*; and now what are theſe? Even the *vileſt* that man can be guilty of, and which God has ſeverely threatened and cenſured in his Revealed Word. They are ſuch as neither Sex can commit till they have caſt off *all Modeſty*, *all Manners*, and *all Fear of God*. The very naming of them (and for brevity and haſte, I will but juſt name them) is enough to make all Men *deteſt* and *dread* them; they are *Adultery*, *Fornication*, and *Acts of Uncleanneſs*; the *horrid* and *damning Nature* of which may be manifeſted, if we conſider,

1. That

1. That they are downright Violations of the Marriage Inſtitution.

2. They bring an Infamy upon Humane Nature; for they baſtardize the Race of Men, they entail a Diſgrace upon Poſterity, which is counted Ignominious and Baſe both in the Laws of God and Men. And then,

3. Laſtly, They are Sins againſt that Purity and Chaſtity both of Mind and Body, which our Lord requires in every one of his Diſciples. *Flee fornication*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Every ſin that a man doth, is without the body: but he that committeth fornication, ſinneth againſt his own body.* Again, *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, or abuſers of themſelves with mankind, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. O ſad and tremendous judgment!* In ſhort, Such Sins as theſe when indulged in, and not puniſhed as the Law requires, when the Actors of them are diſcoverd, are of *Infection* enough to ſpread over and debauch Mankind, and of *weight* and *guilt* enough to *ſink* and *condemn* a Nation. For my Text tells us, *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

1 Cor. 6. 18.

Ibid. v. 9, 10.

I have now finiſhed ſo far as the time would give me leave, the Four Particulars I at firſt propoſed, and ſhall haſten to a Concluſion. You find from what has been ſaid, from whence a Marriage had its Original, what are the Benefits and Bleſſings of it, which are *ſo* many and *ſo* great, that to men who conſider what the World is, what the State and Condition

of

of Humane Nature is, it must both appear *Necessary* and *Praiseworthy*. God and Nature has made it an *Honourable State* of Life; and where it is, there is *Power*, and a *just* and *high Respect* is due unto it. So that every Married Man as such, *Should* [1] *be known in the gates, when he sitteth amongst the elders of the Land.* To be a Father or a Mother, a Husband or a Wife, a Master or a Mistriss, are all of them Titles of Authority and Honour; and some of them are communicated to the greatest Monarchs, as Names of Endearment and Veneration; for they are Fathers to the Kingdoms they govern; and when they are such as that Name imports, they then *have* Power, and they *do* deserve it. What now need I add more to recommend this State of Life to the good Opinion of all Men, seeing that by the Laws of God so much Honour is due to it? Yet, however, what I have said, must not be so understood, as that I would seem to lay a Necessity, or an Obligation in conscience upon all Men to Marry. No! I do not intend that, for I dare not censure Celibacy so severely, * as the *Jews* do; and it is sufficiently known what the Opinions and Practices of the Primitive Christians were with relation to the Unmarried and Married Life. A great deal, I think, is to be allowed to the Prudence or Tempers of Men in this case, and to their Circumstances in the World; and therefore, tho I dare not condemn any for remaining Single, yet I think no reason can be so *excusable*, or at least *laudable* for it, as when Men continue in it upon the account of Religion, *viz.* when they may serve God the better in *that*, than the Married Station.

[1] Prov. 31. 23.

* Ber. Rabbah. par. 34. 21. 2. Ed. ven.

tion. Certainly to abſtain from Marriage, from a principle of *Looſeneſs*, a *ſordid* and *baſe* Temper of Mind, from Sowreneſs, ill Nature, and the like, is a thing very ſinful.

To conclude all, I ſhall from a Conſideration of what has been ſaid upon the *Sacredneſs*, *Neceſſity*, *Conſolations*, *Ends*, and *Uſefulneſs* of a Married Life, ſhut up this Diſcourſe with ſome Expreſſions of the wiſe Son of *Syrach*, whoſe Rules of Life, Judgment of Things, and Elegance of Speech, animated with a ſtrain of Piety, ſhew him to be a Man of an extraordinary Spirit. *A friend and a companion never meet amiſs; but above both, is a wife with her husband. Bleſſed is the man that hath a vertuous wife, for the number of his days ſhall be double. A vertuous woman rejoyceth her husband, and he ſhall fulfil the years of his life in peace. A good wife is a good portion, which ſhall be given in the portion of them that fear the Lord.* Eccl. 40. 23. and 26. 1, 2, 3.

F I N I S.

MOnendas es B. L. quod ob defectum Typorum Æthiopicorum, Arabicorum, & Samaritanorum, voces iſtarum linguarum quibus uſi ſumus Charactere Hebraico edi curavimus, vale & boni conſule.